

NEWS RELEASE

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Texas Man Sentenced to 324 Months in Prison for Using Internet, Traveling to Illinois to Meet Minor

Urbana, Illinois -- A Texas man was sentenced today to a term of 324 months in prison for traveling to Illinois to meet a minor female he had met through the Internet, as announced by Rodger A. Heaton, United States Attorney for the Central District of Illinois. Chief U.S. District Judge Michael P. McCuskey sentenced William H. Veazey, age 61, of Lewisville, Texas and ordered that Veazey be under supervised release for the remainder of his life upon his release from prison. Veazey was remanded to the custody of the U.S. Marshals for transfer to the federal Bureau of Prisons.

In May 2005, Veazey pled guilty to the offenses, admitting that in November 2004, he engaged in Internet chat room conversations with an undercover Decatur, Illinois police detective who identified himself as a 15-year-old female from Illinois. From November 20, 2004 to December 30, 2004, during several on-line Internet chat conversations, Veazey made numerous statements of a sexual nature to persuade the girl to engage in sexual activity. Veazey also made plans to travel to Decatur to meet the girl whom he believed to be under the age of 18. On January 7, 2005, Veazey arrived in Decatur and was arrested by law enforcement agents.

Veazey committed the federal offenses after previously pleading guilty in 1995 to sexually abusing his minor stepdaughter. He was serving a 10-year term of probation at the time of the federal offenses. At sentencing, the government recommended that, given Veazey's prior sex offense and the nature of the federal offenses, the district court apply a zero-tolerance approach to imposing the recommended sentence of 27 years under the advisory Sentencing Guidelines. The district court agreed and followed the government's recommendation.

U.S. Attorney Rodger A. Heaton said, "The Internet creates new ways for sexual predators to lure unsuspecting and vulnerable children. The defendant in this case traveled hundreds of miles under the pretext that he was to meet a young girl in Illinois. Fortunately, no children were harmed in this instance; however, those who engage in this reprehensible behavior should expect to face severe penalties."

“Predators stalk the most vulnerable segments of our society and this case reveals the disturbing truth that some adults will go to great lengths to sexually exploit innocent children,” said Gregory Archambeault, Resident Agent-in-Charge of the ICE Springfield office. “ICE is committed to protecting those who cannot protect themselves, and the victims of child sex predators are at the top of that list.”

The charge was the result of an investigation by the Decatur Police Department and the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement. The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Timothy A. Bass.

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